

VZCZCXYZ0003  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHRA #0939 3171505  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 131505Z NOV 06  
FM AMEMBASSY RIGA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3532

UNCLAS RIGA 000939

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [KWMN](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [UNGA](#) [LG](#)  
SUBJECT: LATVIA AND WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

REF: STATE 178055

¶1. PolEconOff met with Agnese Gaile, Head of the Gender Equality Unit in Latvia's Ministry of Welfare and with Elina Celmina, Deputy Head, on November 9 to share the fact sheet on the September Women's Empowerment Working Session per reftel. Embassy has also provided the fact sheet to three NGOs with interest in the area: Resource Center Marta, the Coalition for Gender Equality, and Lidere.

¶2. The Gender Equality Unit serves as the secretariat for Latvia's Gender Equality Council, chaired by the Minister of Welfare and including representatives (theoretically, each ministry's state secretary level) from the Ministries of Finance, Economics, Justice

SIPDIS  
and Education, as well as NGOs and employer and labor associations. This Council, they said, meets two or three times a year and talks about issues, but does not generate much action. The Unit in the near future will be making proposals for change in the Council. Gaile undertook to distribute the fact sheet as appropriate around government agencies. The relevant minister in Latvia is the Minister of Welfare, Dagnija Stake.

¶3. Gaile and Celmina were quite interested in the initiative, having worked successfully, they believe, with the USG on combating human trafficking in the past. They asked questions about the target for possible future projects, noting that there was quite a range of countries on the participation list, and about what more specific action might be contemplated in relation to the recommendations in the fact sheet. They also saw a similarity between this set of recommendations and some conclusions that have been reached by a Nordic intergovernmental meeting concerned with women's empowerment. Emboff noted that the Department welcomes feedback on possible projects, partnerships or activities and suggested contacting the office indicated on the fact sheet for further information.

¶4. Celmina hinted that financial support for women's empowerment programs in Latvia would be welcome, saying that a successful program would require resources, resources that are not forthcoming from the Latvian government, and referred again to the success experienced with the USG on combating human trafficking. She noted that the USG had provided support for that effort.

BAILEY